

BRAC Advisory Group Meeting

June 17, 2009

7pm – 9pm

Burke Branch Library

Roll Call –

Present:

Jim Turkel, Chief, Belvoir Integration Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

John Komoroske, Planning Commission

Jayme Blakesley, Alexandria Transportation Commission

Peter Scholz, Duke Realty

Geoffrey Goodale – Vice Chair, Brookville-Seminary Valley

Julie Edelson, Lincolnia Hills/Heywood Glen

Mark Benedict, Parkside of Alexandria

Dick Somers, Seminary Park Community Association

Dave Dexter - Chair, Seminary West

Nancy Jennings, Seminary Hill

Ronald Sturman, Seminary Heights

Kathy Burns, West End Business Association

Kai Reynolds, JBG

Other representatives:

Mr. Travis Edwards, Public Affairs BRAC Outreach Chief

Gwen Sigda, Office of Senator Jim Webb

Not Present:

Jerry Dawson, Duke Realty

Colonel Moffatt, Fort Belvoir Deputy Garrison Commander for Transformation and BRAC

Dr. Gueverra, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership

Dave Cavanaugh, Seminary Ridge

City Staff:

Faroll Hamer, Director of Planning and Zoning

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Jeff Farner, Deputy of Urban Design

Tom Canfield, City Architect

Ravi Raut, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

Kathleen Beeton, Department of Planning and Zoning

Pat Escher, Department of Planning and Zoning

DOT:

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Tim Lewis P.E., Federal Highway Administration, Area Engineer

VDOT

Tom Fahrney, P.E., BRAC Coordinator

Ronaldo T. “Nic” Nicholson, VDOT Regional Transportation Director for the Northern Virginia Megaprojects

Emmett Heltzel, P.E., VDOT - Assistant State Location and Design Engineer, Central Office Location and Design Division

T-3

William Haynes – Seminary Road – IJS Project manager

1. Meeting open to public comment – none given

2. Transportation issues

a. Letters to City Council from the Advisory Group, Duke Realty and the Transportation Commission were submitted and will be discussed at the June 23rd Council meeting. The Council will receive a letter from the City Manager, Jim Hartman, with a recommendation. The letter has not been drafted but it is thought that it will support the three major items discussed within the Advisory Group’s letter to:

- i. Support the direct access ramp to the Mark Center site;
- ii. Have a traffic analysis preformed of the existing studies; and
- iii. Delay the proposed road improvements until the traffic analysis has been performed

In order to have the analysis performed on an accelerated time line with an October/November deadline, a consultant will have to be hired as City staff doesn’t have the capacity to perform the work. The study will review all existing data and may require additional information. It is estimated that this study will cost approximately \$100,000 dollars and a funding source needs to be found. Given the hard economic times, the City has requested that the Corps of Engineers pay for the study. The Army is reviewing that request.

3. Updates:

Army:

- i. Reviewing some architectural revisions to the south garage;
- ii. Reviewing the City’s conceptual site layout, maybe able to incorporate most of the ideas into a revised layout;
- iii. Reviewing pedestrian circulation;

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- iv. Have selected a firm to prepare the Transportation Management Plan (TMP), but it has not been awarded yet, hopefully sometime next week – it maybe around September when the TMP will be far enough along that the group may review some draft analysis;
- v. Will go back to NCPC early fall – the TMP needs to be completed prior to that meeting.

Duke:

- i. The June 1 letter contained a reiteration of the construction of the direct access ramp time line which was discussed at the previous meeting.

VDOT:

- i. Status of the Interchange Justification Study (IJS) – The traffic counts have been completed, currently reviewing geometry and existing conditions, will begin public outreach this fall and will let the group know when this will occur. IDA building is within the scope of the study. The IJR will be completed by the end of the year. VDOT will provide a map of the study area and interchanges, this study's primary focus is on the interstate, the interchanges and some of the adjacent intersections. The group expressed concern about the portion of Seminary Road northwest of Beauford to the Fairfax County line. VDOT stated that they would review the potential of expanding their scope, but was concerned that there may be confusion with too many studies that may overlap. When completed, the IJS will be submitted to VDOT's central office for review, pending that review for quality, it will then be submitted to the FHWA for final review. It was apparent that the IJS will not be finalized prior to the October/November deadline.
- ii. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) – Hope to have recommendations within one month's time.

FHWA:

- i. Direct access ramp will require, at a minimum, an environmental assessment study which will take 12 to 18 months to perform and then it will have to be reviewed. After approval by FHWA, VDOT will have to appropriate funding for the ramp – it would be 2 to 4 years after the studies are done for the ramp to be completed. It is safe to say that the BRAC facility will be open for business prior to the direct access ramp being built.

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- i. The probability that this ramp would qualify for any defense access money is low.

Duke:

- i. The garage is designed for an access ramp, if it is determined that is where the ramp should be constructed.

4. Architecture and site circulation

Jeff Farner and Tom Canfield presented discussion items. The City's conceptual site circulation was presented showing the north garage open to the entire campus, facilitating vehicular and pedestrian movement, the potential of having the direct access ramp having two points of entry, one to the entire campus and the other to the south garage. Before and after pictures were shown to demonstrate the enhancements that have been done to the building by adding more glass to the middle and top of the building, enhancing the western portion of the building with more prominent vertical fins and refining the canopy on the eastern side to have a curved element. It was discussed that the larger canopy on the eastern façade was necessary due to the prominence of the building and the long distances that the building would be seen from on I-395 and beyond. It was believed that putting the canopy on the western portion of the building would overwhelm the existing Mark Center buildings and interior spaces, especially give the mass and scale of the two towers.

The potential for LEED certification was discussed and it was indicated that the building will be LEED silver and the Army was reviewing the potential for LEED gold accreditation. Items that are considered with the LEED certification include using recycled materials, using local materials, water conservation, certain light fixtures and minimizing the "heat island" effect of the roofing materials.

The north parking garage was discussed, indicating it would have vegetated or "green screen" walls on three elevations and there have been discussions about the roof and what ways could it be modified to have a less visual impact on the surrounding building that will be looking down on it. The City is in ongoing discussions about this and other architectural components of the buildings.

The discussion returned to site circulation and limited access from the site to go north on I-395. It was discussed that the actual site layout and circulation will be determined with the conclusion of the IJS study.

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Discussion of the Remote Inspection Facility (RIF) - location, configuration and the potential of placing the facility underground. Placing the facility underground poses several concerns one of which would be an egress route in case of an emergency. Alternatives to undergrounding the RIF maybe berming and providing a green roof. The City's position is that the RIF should be located off site and will be having that discussion with more elevated Army staff and this process will be facilitated by Gwen Sigda, with Senator Webb's office.

Discussion of the construction schedule – 1st week in July will begin setting steel and applying pre-cast on the towers will in October/November– after that they will begin to start the south garage.

Beauregard Small Area Plan – Kathleen Beeton stated that staff has been authorized to apply for a BRAC grant from available funds of the Office of Economic Adjustment. Staff is requesting \$600,000 to \$700,000 dollars. Once the grant has been approved, staff will start working on background information and the public process will start in the fall with an anticipated approval by Council in December of 2010. The plan will have a transportation component that will extend beyond the land use review boundary and include many of the intersections that the group have concerns about. The plan will analyze such issues as land use, BRAC impacts, development impacts to the school system, water and sewer capacity, flood areas, resource protection areas, etc.

Mike Chipley presented an over view of the City wide efforts to attract Federal agencies to the City. The city has lost 7,200 jobs as a result of the BRAC relocation efforts. The City is in great position to recruit these agencies and has available office space to do so. Federal agencies have financial benefits such as attracting their associated contractors to relocate close to them and the improvements to the Mark Center have made the improvements to the Landmark Mall more feasible. For more information, Mike's presentation can be found on the City's P&Z page along with other BRAC documentation. <http://alexandriava.gov/Planning>